

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended). A method of forwarding post, comprising the steps of:

scanning an address face of the post for a TAG ID specific to the post;

consulting a database for records related to the TAG ID, wherein the records contain information indicating if said TAG ID specific to the post is expired ~~and if a redirection fee has been paid,~~

if the TAG ID specific to the post is expired: [[,]]

automatically determining if an addressee of the post maintains a forwarding service account, and

if the forwarding service account is maintained, debiting the account automatically in an appropriate amount and forwarding the post to an addressee destination address ~~in the forwarding service account.~~

Claim 2 (previously presented). The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of automatically offering a forwarding service account to said addressee if said addressee does not maintain a forwarding service account.

Claim 3 (previously presented). The method according to claim 2, further comprising the step of not forwarding the post to an addressee destination address if said addressee does not maintain a forwarding service account.

Claim 4 (previously presented). The method according to claim 3, wherein said step of not forwarding further comprises the step of destroying the post.

Claim 5 (previously presented). The method according to claim 4, wherein said step of not forwarding further comprises a pre-selected time delay prior to destruction of said post.

Claim 6 (canceled).

Claim 7 (currently amended). An apparatus for forwarding post, comprising:

means for scanning an address face of the post for a TAG ID specific to the post and consulting a database for records related to said TAG ID, said records containing information indicating if said TAG ID specific to the post is expired ~~and if a redirection fee has been paid,~~

means for automatically determining if an addressee of the post maintains a forwarding service account if said TAG ID specific to the post is expired, and

means for automatically debiting said account in an appropriate amount and forwarding the post to an addressee destination address ~~in said forwarding service account~~ if said forwarding service account is maintained and if said TAG ID specific to the post is expired.

Claim 8 (previously presented). The apparatus according to claim 7, further comprising means for automatically offering a forwarding service account to said addressee if said addressee does not maintain a forwarding service account.

Claim 9 (previously presented). The apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising means for not forwarding the post to an addressee destination address if said addressee does not maintain a forwarding service account.

Claim 10 (previously presented). The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said means for not forwarding further comprises means for destroying the post.

Claim 11 (previously presented). The apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said means for not forwarding further comprises a pre-selected time delay prior to destruction of the post.

Claim 12 (canceled).

Claim 13 (new). The apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the post is an item of mail.

Claim 14 (new). The method according to claim 1, wherein the post is an item of mail.